Masters of Science in TESOL

This report summarizes key assessment findings that demonstrate the effectiveness of the TESOL program preparing candidates in the following areas: (1) content knowledge, (2) professional and pedagogical knowledge, skill, and dispositions, and (3) effects on student learning and on creating environments that support learning. The faculty regularly reviews data on all the following key assessments - Assessment 1 (Content Specialty Test scores), Assessments 2 (Content Area Curriculum Unit), Assessment 3 (Sheltered Instructional Observation Plan), Assessment 4 (Clinical Practice Portfolio), Assessment 5 (Student Case Study), and Assessment 6 (Diversity Research Project), and discusses the implications of these findings of these assessments for program improvement.

From September 2011 to May 2013, the faculty met regularly to review the candidate performance data and to discuss the improvement of the program during program meetings and at the first annual School of Education assessment retreat in May 2013. The evaluation of the program led to changes in the assessments for improving candidate performance. Through the TESOL SPA review process, we made the revision of assessments and began the accumulation of new data for program improvement.

The data review suggests that candidates in the program performed well across all assessments addressing The ongoing evaluation of the program by the faculty resulted in the following changes in the program and action plans for improving candidate performance:

**Content knowledge**

Throughout the program, the candidates have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their content knowledge which is measured in two ways: the New York State Licensure Exam Content Specialty Test (CST) in ESOL and the Content Area Curriculum Unit. Principal findings indicate that the majority of candidates have met or exceeded CST pass rates.

During the academic year 2008-2009, 92% of our TESOL candidates passed the CST.

For the Content Area Curriculum Project, 100% of the candidates “Met” or “Exceeded” all of the TESOL standards performance indicators for the assessment in content knowledge. This indicates that our candidates have a solid understanding of the theoretical and research based foundations of TESOL instruction. Through the creation of a content area curriculum unit employing ESL methodology and appropriate instructional techniques, the candidates link research in second language learning to the development and application of quality content for linguistically and culturally responsive teaching.

Specifically, the Content Area Curriculum Unit data indicates that the candidates are able to effectively apply the knowledge gained in the program.

**Pedagogical and Professional Knowledge, Diversity, and Dispositions**
The key assessment findings indicate that our candidates demonstrate ability in meeting the diverse needs of ELLs. They understand the need for and are able to administer a variety of assessments. They analyze these assessments and use them to plan for and provide in-depth instruction using a variety of resources, strategies, and technologies. Our candidates’ instruction is firmly grounded in foundational research. More than 90 percent of the candidates understand how to meet the diverse linguistic and cultural needs of ELLs through differentiated instruction.

Our candidates’ strengths extend beyond the classroom. They are able to plan, and implement rich ESL lessons in language and content development, use appropriate assessment and instructional tools and serve as teacher leaders in professional development activities and programs. Close to 100 percent of the candidates have demonstrated their own commitment to personal growth by self-reflection, being a ‘continuous learner’ and by their involvement in professional organizations, attendance at conferences and other events to improve their practice. We feel we can build on these strengths by setting high expectations for professional dispositions through a seventh assessment—Professional Dispositions Inventory is being administered twice in the candidates’ program experience to measure professional growth at the start and at the end of the program.

**Emphasis on Student Teaching and Learning**

Through fieldwork, performance assessments, class discussions, clinical practice, and portfolios, more than 90 percent of the candidates have demonstrated a positive impact on students’ learning. They have constructed, administered and interpreted a variety of assessments. These analyses have guided the candidates’ design and implementation of curriculum and instruction for ELLs with a diverse range of linguistic abilities. Additionally candidates communicate and collaborate with teachers, parents, and TESOL program specialists.

The data revealed that our candidates’ performance is strong on assessments that are tied to field and clinical experiences working directly with students and school communities in New York City and surrounding areas such as Westchester County.

**Changes for Better**

Based on our key assessment results, we are strengthening the integration of technology into the TESOL curriculum, and support our candidates’ more creative uses of technology in their instructional practice.

We feel strongly that candidates should benefit from increased opportunities for enhancing their knowledge in engaging parents in their professional teaching preparation. The School of Education launched the Mercy College SOE Parent Center in the spring semester 2010 with the intent of creating a new paradigm for teacher preparation and parent engagement. Field experiences in the TESOL courses will include parent engagement activities in those partner schools involved in this initiative.
There will be continuous efforts to collect specific candidate performance data in relation to the standards and to assess the effects of our instructional program on candidate performance and on student learning, and to ensure continued program improvement.